

# METHODISM

IN

## BRADFORD.

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*(Reprinted from the "Bradford Observer.")*

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PRICE THREEPENCE.

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BRADFORD: THOMAS BREAR.  
1878.

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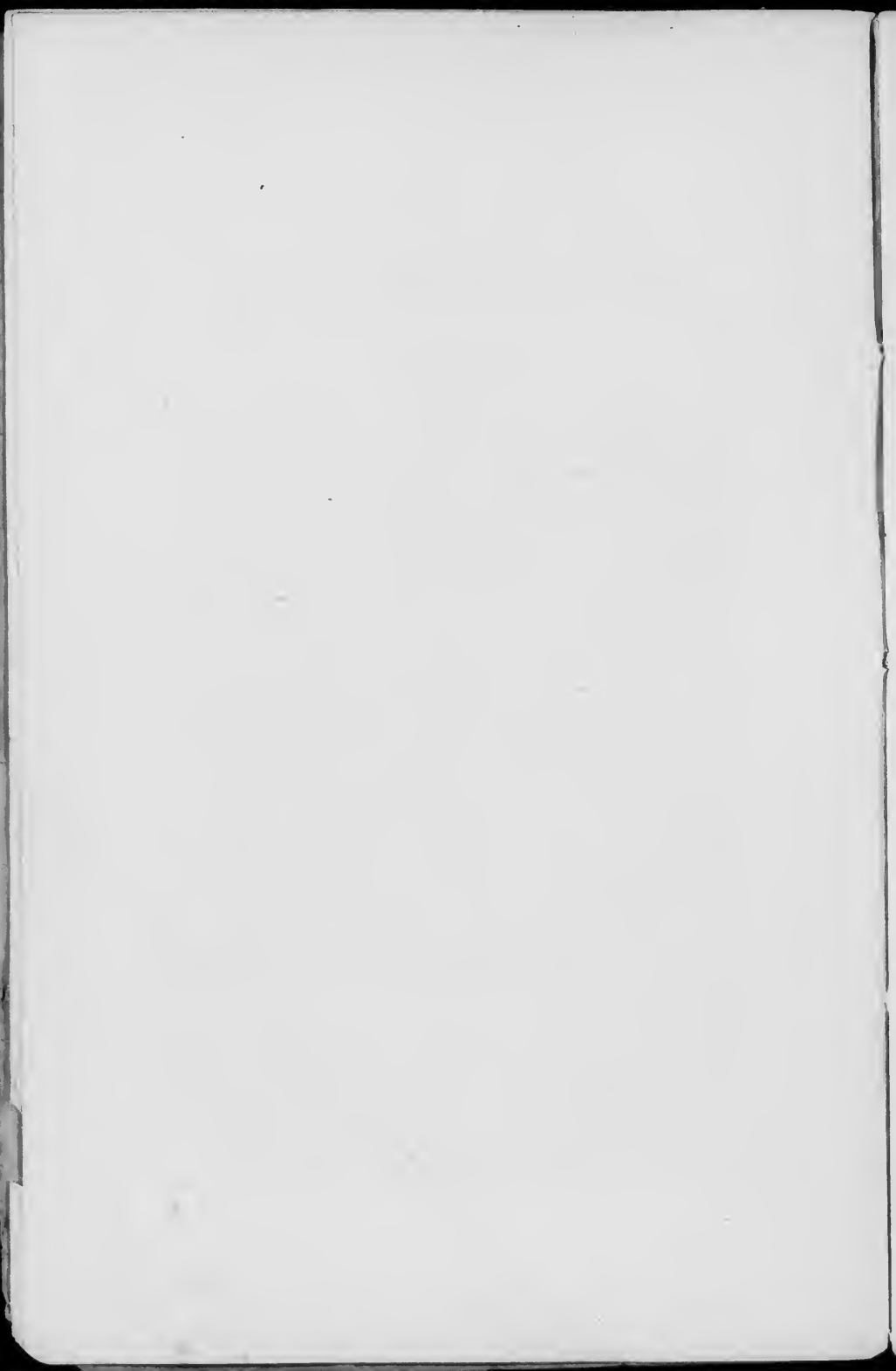
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## P R E F A C E .

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The Methodism of Bradford has so far interwoven itself with the social and religious life of the town that any reliable account of its rise and progress will doubtless be regarded with interest, and especially so when the heart of the denomination is stimulated afresh by the approaching visit of Conference. At such a time we may venture upon the belief that the "short and simple annals" of local Methodism which we now present may be perused with corresponding interest by those who, although outside its pale, are none the less in genuine sympathy with its aims and objects. In their compilation we are largely indebted to the Rev. W. W. Stamp's useful book on the "History of Bradford Methodism," and also to several gentlemen who have lent us documents.

*Bradford, July, 1878.*



## METHODISM IN BRADFORD.

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The year 1744 was marked in a general and local sense by the meeting of the first Methodist Conference in the Foundry, London, and by the visits to Bradford of two apostles of the faith, who may be said to have sown the seeds of the future thriving plant in the town. It is a strange reflection that the first Methodist preacher who visited Bradford was brought here a prisoner, charged only with the crime of stimulating men to a loftier state of existence; and that the first Methodist service was a prayer-meeting held at the door of a prison! That victim to a staunch enunciation of his religious views was John Nelson, the mason-preacher of Birstal, and the scene of his incarceration was the old dungeon at the top of Ivegate. John had been travelling about the land, working by day and preaching by night, doing his utmost to spread Methodism wherever he went, and on reaching home received warning that he would be impressed for the army if he did not escape. But not even this miserable device to put an end to his preaching of doctrines which were repugnant to the parish clergyman could stop Nelson's mouth, much less cause him to flee his own neighbourhood, and, at the instigation of the Vicar of Birstal, he was apprehended when preaching at Adwalton on May 4, 1744, condemned at Halifax, and brought to Bradford for temporary imprisonment. The filthy state of the dungeon, into which flowed the refuse from a slaughter-house above, the gathering of a few people

round the door, where they sang and prayed all night, the departure of the persecuted man next morning for Leeds in the company of his soldier-guard, are points which have often been graphically described, and need not be further dwelt upon.

On the 17th of June in the same year, or eight days before the meeting of Conference, John Wesley preached for the first time in Bradford, namely, at Little Horton, where a small society existed, and in April, 1745, and January, 1746, he again visited the town. Up to this period no regular organisation had existed of Bradford Methodists, but upon the occasion of Wesley's fourth visit a class was formed, consisting of Betty Firth, John Murgatroyd, Nathaniel Dracup, with Thomas Mitchell as leader, which was the germ of the Bradford Methodist Society. Of the above-named four persons, Betty Firth, of Great Horton, was one of the little company which gathered round the dungeon door on the night of Nelson's incarceration. She afterwards married Thomas Worsnop, and went to live at Low Moor, where she introduced Methodism. John Murgatroyd was born at Gildersome, but afterwards resided at Little Horton. Nathaniel Dracup was a native of Idle, but afterwards lived at Great Horton. Thos. Mitchell, in all probability the first Methodist in Bradford, was born at Bingley, and was a stonemason. Other of the early propagators of Methodism who visited Bradford were George Whitefield and William Grimshaw, and the spots selected by them for outdoor preaching were the Bowling Green front, the open space in the Tyrrels, near the Cockpit, and the spot occupied as a coal-staith in Well Street, now the site of Foster's Buildings. Not one of these places would now be recognisable. Whitefield was one of the early members of the "Holy Club," and Grimshaw, while still retaining his incumbency of



Haworth Church, superintended two Methodist circuits extending over Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire. In addition to his Sunday labours at Haworth, Grimshaw, it is said, travelled over his two circuits every two weeks, often preaching thirty times a week. At this period, and indeed until Bradford was constituted the head of a circuit, the societies in the immediate neighbourhood were connected with Birstal, the "Mother Church," and to there, alternately with Haworth, the early Methodists of Bradford resorted for worship—a distance of ten miles. The "word of the Lord" was "precious" in those days.

It was not until the year 1756 that a room in the Cockpit was taken by the Methodists for worship; the only remaining places of worship in Bradford being the Parish Church, the Presbyterian Chapel, and the Friends' Meeting-house. The building known as the Cockpit stood at the junction of Bond Street with Aldermanbury. Its site has recently been appropriated for the erection of a warehouse by Mr. Enoch Aykroyd. To this place came John Wesley in May, 1757, and the record we have in his Journal, as follows:—

Thursday, May 12.—The latter end of the week I spent in Bradford. On Sunday at five, the house contained the congregation, but at eight they covered the plain adjoining to it. As soon as the service of the church was ended, I began at the end of the house again, and exhorted a willing multitude to "follow after charity."

The "plain" alluded to was the vacant space, interrupted only by the old prison, on which now stand the shops occupied by Harrison & Parkinson, &c., and extending up to the Sun Inn. The beck was then, of course, open and clean. Not long afterwards the Methodists were obliged to vacate the

room in the Cockpit, owing to the floor giving way, when they removed to a barn behind the old Paper Hall in Barkerend, then in the occupation of Mr. James Garnett, but again returned to the Cockpit. Unfortunately doctrinal differences were at that early period rife. Calvinism and Arminianism were the principal bones of contention, and some warm words were bandied about among the early members of the denomination. Nor was Antinomianism, which had been freely sown in the town by Ingham, the founder of the sect of that name, dead, and it would appear that the Rev. Wm. Crabtree, minister of the first Baptist Church in Bradford, gave the early Methodists some disquietude, for Wesley (1761) says "An Anabaptist teacher had unsettled and perplexed the minds of several." The result was that a polemical tournament took place upon a stage erected in Burnet Fields, when the "five points" were discussed with the usual result, namely, that each of the contending parties remained the more fixed in its respective views.

In the autumn of 1765 land was purchased for a chapel in Horton Road, upon a site since taken up by the house immediately above the new Alexandra Hotel. We have been favoured with an inspection of the original deeds conveying this site, from which it appears that in October, 1765, Charles Swain Booth, Esq., of Bradford, in consideration of the sum of £20 paid him by William Wilkinson, of the same place, stuff maker, and on his covenanting to pay a yearly rent of £3 12s. 0d., conveyed to the latter for the term of 999 years, a parcel of land called the Hilly Close, in Horton, formerly in the tenure of Edward Jobson, and then late in the possession of Thos. Aked, deceased. By indenture dated the 21st December following, Wilkinson assigns his interest in the above purchase to Richard Stocks, of Bradford

grocer and linen draper; John Hodgson, of Horton, stuff maker; Henry Atkinson, of Manningham, stuff maker; Nathaniel Dracup, of Horton, shuttle maker; Ebenezer Pyrah, of Wibsey, stuff maker; John Butler, of Bradford, stuff maker; and John Murgatroyd, of Horton, stuff maker, in consideration of their undertaking all the liabilities of payment incurred by himself as above, upon trust that they should permit John Wesley, then late of Lincoln College, Oxford, clerk, and such other persons as he might from time to time appoint, to enjoy the free use of the preaching-house then in course of erection upon it, and Charles Wesley, then late of Christ Church, Oxford, clerk, and such other persons as he might appoint, and after their decease that the above-named trustees should permit all such persons as were appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists in London, Bristol, or Leeds to have and enjoy the same. In 1790 an after deed securing the property was executed between Thomas Thornton and all the above trustees except Stocks, and attested by John Wesley in the presence of George Highfield and Alexander Mather, travelling preachers.

The building when completed was described as the "largest octagon in England," hence its name of the "Octagon" Chapel. It was opened in the summer following, and Mr. Wesley, speaking of it, said, "It is the first of the kind where the roof is built with common sense, rising only a third of its breadth; yet it is as firm as any in England, nor does it at all hurt the walls." What subscriptions were obtained towards the erection of the old Octagon Chapel will probably continue to remain undiscoverable, but it is upon record that when John Murgatroyd and Richard Fawcett (father of the Richard Fawcett who in after years played so prominent a part in Bradford

Methodism) sallied forth on a collecting expedition, the first contribution received was the magnificent sum of twopence towards the outlay of £997 8s. 9d.! In order that the services might not interfere with those of the Parish Church, the times of worship at the Octagon were nine in the morning, two in the afternoon, and five in the evening; nor was it till the removal to Kirkgate forty years afterwards, that the Sacrament was administered in the Methodist chapels of Bradford. The next year, viz., 1767, a preacher's house was erected adjoining the chapel, the whole expense of both house and furniture being under £200. In 1810 the property, including the chapel and adjoining houses, was sold to Mr. Richard Fawcett for £1575, and that gentleman subsequently purchased the adjoining plot, called Randal Well Close, and built upon it Westbrook House, where he resided, the chapel site being disposed of to Thomas Horsfall.

In the year 1769 Bradford was separated from Birstal, and became the head of a circuit, which included the present circuits of Halifax, Sowerby Bridge, Yeadon, Woodhouse Grove, and Shipley. The number of members in society at that period was 732. The first Wesleyan ministers stationed in the town under the new arrangement were John Oliver and Thomas Lee. Both of these were men who served their day and generation well, and both did so in spite of persecution and the loss of personal comfort. Oliver, like John Nelson, suffered imprisonment manfully, while Lee, locally styled Tommy Lee, was among the bravest of the travelling preachers of the period. His name is still cherished in the district "round about Bradford." The pecuniary arrangements of Methodism at that time, however, were far from complete, as appears from an entry in the Bradford circuit book for 1770. The

following scale of allowances was scarcely tempting to any one seeking the ministry as a profession merely. Thus—

Preacher's weekly board, thirteen weeks					
at 3s. 6d. ... ..	£2	5	6		
Quarterage ... ..	3	0	0		
Ditto for wife ... ..	1	17	6		
Allowed for servant... ..	0	12	6		
Ditto for turnpikes ... ..	0	6	0		
<hr/>					
Total quarter's allowance ... ..	£8	1	6		

Less than £30 per annum was thus the whole income of the preacher and his family for clothing, maintenance, and other necessities! In 1773 a new chapel was erected at Pudsey, and in 1775 another at Eccleshill. From a "catalogue" kept by Mr. Mather, one of the ministers for Bradford in 1781, it appears that the number in society in the Bradford branch of the circuit was 1072. The circuit stewards were John Garforth and Thomas Haigh—grandfather of the late Thomas Haigh, of the Savings Bank, himself a worthy descendant of his Methodist ancestor. In 1785 Halifax was separated from Bradford, and constituted the head of a circuit. In 1788 John Wesley paid his last visit to Bradford, and preached at the Octagon at five in the morning, at which time, it is stated, the chapel was well filled. In consequence of the death of the patriarchal founder of Methodism, three years after, district meetings were instituted, and Halifax, in conjunction with Bradford, Colne, Keighley, and Huddersfield, was appointed to be a centre.

With the incoming of a new century came increased activity in the Methodist cause in Bradford, and towards the close of 1805, under the ministrations of Alexander Suter and Stephen Wilson, we are told that the town was "favoured with one of those extra-

ordinary visitations which have occasionally marked the progress of Zion. The doors of the Octagon Chapel were, for ten or twelve weeks, scarcely closed day or night, one party of worshippers waiting without while those within had fulfilled the appointed hour of service." In 1807, two years later, the Bradford Society numbered 1874 members, and the following list of places, with the names of class leaders, will show the wide area then covered, viz. :—

Bradford, 254 members; leaders, W. Merrill, S. Slater, S. Lofthouse, J. Smith, F. Hodgson, W. Whitaker, J. Ackroyd, J. Turner, W. Midgley. Little Horton, 193 members; leaders, J. Blamires, J. Blackburn, W. Cryer, J. Bower, J. Ackroyd. Bradford Moor, 50 members; leaders, S. Gamble, J. Hinchliffe. Manningham, 45 members; leader, T. White. Heaton, 23 members; leader, J. Child. Bankfoot, 42 members; leaders, J. Lightowler, H. Butler. Idle, 112 members; leaders, J. Keighley, J. Page, J. Lee. E. cleshill, 129 members; leaders, T. Yewdall, S. Waterhouse, W. Yewdall, J. Fenton. Farnley, 75 members; leaders, W. Farrar, J. Newton, E. Pawson, T. Ripley. Calverley, 54 members; leaders, J. Overend, J. Keighley. Pudsey, 277 members; leaders, J. Brown, B. Lee, G. Sugden, W. Farrar, W. Oddy, G. Ambler, J. Raistrick. Low Moor, 81 members; leaders, G. Hoyle, W. Pearson, Thomas Worsnop. Brownroyd, 28 members; leader, G. Wright-Bierley, 16 members; leader, A. Howgate. Sticker Lane, 21 members; leaders, J. Ludlam, J. Garforth. Farsley, 44 members; leader J. Turner. Dudley Hill, 30 members; leader, B. Fieldhouse. Daisy Hill, 34 members; leader, M. Clayton. Greengates, 24 members; leader, W. Child. Wibsey, 48 members; leader, J. Worsnop. Horton, 203 members; leaders, J. Wilkinson, G. Dracup, J. Parker, R. Turner, N. Dracup, J. Liversedge.

Early in the year 1808, the first Sunday school was established in connection with Methodism in Bradford, under the presidency of the Rev. John Gaulter. Messrs. J. Blackburn and W. Cryer acted as

secretaries, and a committee of 23 undertook the superintendence of the school in turn. At first it was held in the Octagon Chapel, but the number of scholars so increased that an offer of an upper room in Mr. Richard Fawcett's warehouse in Union Street was gladly accepted, and here, we are told, 850 scholars and 160 teachers gathered. The course of instruction, however, was somewhat primitive, judging by the experience of one of the first scholars now living, who states that the letters of the alphabet were taught by the teacher drawing his finger across a tray of sand, which of course was readily restored to an even surface again! The acquisition of slates was considered a vast stride. A room was afterwards rented in Fawcett Row, until the building in School Street was completed. Subsequent extensions being required, a room was taken at the top of Vicar Lane; then a school was built between George Street and Frederick Street. Prominent among those who carried through these stages of progress were John Blackburn and William Whitaker, both of whom gloried in the good work they were engaged in. In the following year, 1809, the chapel at Raw Nook, Low Moor, was opened.

In a year or so afterwards the erection of a larger edifice than the Octagon was contemplated, and after much deliberation, and in respectful disregard of the strong remonstrances of many country friends who considered the Octagon the chapel of the circuit as well as of the town, a piece of land, comprising houses, warehouses, and garden plot, the property of Mr. Abraham Gibson, was purchased, and upon it the present Kirkgate Chapel was erected. The deed of release conveying the property bears date January 12, 1811, and the following individuals are named as trustees:— George Mawson, iron-founder; John Key, druggist; John Aked, raff merchant; Richard Fawcett, merchant; Wm.

Dufton, woolstapler; James Gamble, linen draper; John Greenwood, grocer; James Sharp, cotton manufacturer; Joseph Ackroyd, grocer; John Smith, cotton manufacturer; Joshua Jennings, corn miller; John Blackburn, accountant; Wm. Whitaker, wool-sorter; Watson Cryer, linen draper; John Sutcliffe, cotton spinner, Halifax; Thos. Pawson, merchant, Farnley. Four of the above trustees only surviving in 1837, a fresh trust was formed, comprising the following, viz.:—Messrs. Abm. Brumfit, draper; Thos. Holmes, draper; Samuel Selby, woolstapler; Thos. Haigh, schoolmaster; James Bottomley, shop-keeper; Henry Simpson, draper; John C. Cooper, surgeon; Geo. Parkinson, draper; and H. W. Blackburn, woolstapler, and since then the trust has been twice revised. The chapel, plain in exterior, yet capable of seating 1400 persons, was regarded as one of the largest structures in the entire Connexion. For the purchase of the original premises £2940 was given, and as several portions not requisite were sold off, the actual cost of the chapel, burial ground, and preachers' houses behind entailed a cost upon the trustees of about £9000, since increased to £12,000 by extensions. The burial-ground behind Kirkgate Chapel was opened in 1815, as appears from a minute of a meeting held on the 22nd April of that year, there being present Messrs. Richard Fawcett, George Mawson, John Aked, James Gamble, John Greenwood, Wm. Whitaker, and Joseph Ackroyd. From the period of its opening until the year 1855, when it came under the General Order for closing, there were no fewer than 3100 interments made in the ground. In 1867 the burial-ground was entirely cut off from the rest of the chapel property by the formation of Godwin Street, for which ample compensation was made by the Corporation.

Kirkgate Chapel was opened on May 12, 1811, by



the Revs. Charles Atmore and Robert Newton, and from that day forward Methodism in Bradford assumed a new and more commanding position. In the autumn of 1813 the Benevolent or Strangers' Friend Society was instituted for the town and neighbourhood, and still continues its beneficent work. In the important movement for extending missions the Wesleyans of Bradford also took a prominent part. At a meeting held at Halifax in November, 1813, Mr. Richard Fawcett in the chair, it was determined to form a branch of the Wesleyan Missionary Society for the Halifax and Bradford district. Mr. James Gamble was appointed treasurer of the Bradford Committee, and Messrs. Abraham Brumfit and John Broadbent secretaries. In the Conference Minutes of 1812 Woodhouse Grove School appears as a branch of the Bradford Circuit, but in the following year Eccleshill, Undercliffe, Idle, &c., were taken from Bradford and were allotted to the Grove, which was made the head of a circuit. In 1814 the Great Horton Chapel was built to take the place of the "Old School," which had become far too small to contain the increasing congregation there. Its formal opening took place on Easter Tuesday, 1815, when the Revs. Robert Newton and James Everett presided. On the erection of the Church Sunday School at Horton, in 1808, under the auspices of the Rev. John Crosse, vicar of Bradford, the Sunday School, which had been held by the Methodists in their preaching-room, was transferred to the Church, and as a Methodist school was not revived until twelve years afterwards.

Little worth recording occurred between the date last referred to (1815) until the appointment of Messrs. Isaac Turton and David Stoner to the Bradford Circuit in 1819, and in the two succeeding years of Messrs. Joseph Entwistle and David Stoner. This period was one of such a spiritual awakening

that it is said over a thousand members were added within three years, and within other three years of their removal to other circuits, Eastbrook, Dudley Hill, and Bradford Moor Chapels were built. David Stoner seems to have been a man of intense earnestness and power. A colleague of William Bramwell, who died in the streets of Leeds, Stoner imbibed his spirit, and acquired a name which was not only revered in the Bradford Circuit, but which has since become precious throughout the Methodist world. In no place were his triumphs greater than in Bradford. Mr. Stoner was a native of Barwick-in-Elmet, near Leeds, and died in Liverpool in 1826, at the early age of thirty-two years. A tablet, bearing a eulogistic inscription, is erected to his memory in Kirkgate Chapel. A congenial colleague of Stoner's during the last two years of his residence here was the Rev. Joseph Entwistle, who, beginning his ministry in 1786, continued until 1841, a period of fifty-five years. Faithful in his pastoral duties, Mr. Entwistle combined an aptitude for circuit business and a "method" in carrying it out, which made him a truly valuable man, as the records of Kirkgate Chapel abundantly testify. Mr. Entwistle was twice elected President of the Conference, viz., in 1812 and 1825. The allowance to preachers during the stay of Stoner and Entwistle, although somewhat improved from that afforded in 1770, was yet decidedly moderate, judging by the following quarter's bill :—

	£	s.	d.
Mr. Stoner, board ... ..	9	12	0
Do. quarterage ... ..	4	4	0
Mrs. Stoner's quarterage ... ..	4	4	0
One child ... ..	2	2	0
Servant ... ..	3	3	0
Washing ... ..	0	15	0
Letters and paper ... ..	0	8	6
House bill ... ..	0	5	6

The whole outlay for the quarter, including rent of ministers' houses, and incidental expenses, was about £95, which amount was just about covered by the contributions from the various classes in the Society. The Revs. John Rigg and George Tindall joined Mr. Entwistle in 1822. The former, the father of the Rev. Dr. Rigg, Principal of the Normal Training Institution at Westminster, was esteemed as a theologian while residing here, and during his stay a further increase of members was reported. He returned to the town in 1841, after the division of the circuit. In the year 1823 Dudley Hill Chapel was opened by Revs. David Stoner and E. Farrar, and in November of the same year the old chapel at Bradford Moor was opened by the Revs. Robert Newton and E. Farrar. The Sunday School, which had for some time been held in Fawcett Row, was also removed in 1823 to the new building in School Street, which had been erected for the purpose. In the succeeding year a school, the predecessor of White Abbey Chapel, was erected in Regent Street.

The greatest indication of the increased vitality of the Methodist Society in the town, however, was furnished by the erection of Eastbrook Chapel. The proposal, which originated and took active shape in 1823, was in great measure stimulated by the constant pressure put upon the trustees of Kirkgate Chapel for sittings which they could not supply, and after some negotiation a plot of land, the property of Mr. Charles Harris, and situate fronting to Leeds Road, was purchased. The venture was considered a bold one by many, especially when it was proposed to erect upon the site a building even larger than Kirkgate Chapel, but the result has proved the foresight of the promoters. As a matter of fact, the neighbourhood of the now hemmed-in Eastbrook Chapel

was then decidedly suburban, insomuch that the only objection entertained with regard to it by Dr. Adam Clarke, who officiated at the opening, was that the chapel was "rather too far out of the town." The style of architecture adopted was also in advance of the prevailing style, being described as "approaching to the Gothic," and the interior was constructed to accommodate 1500 persons. The architect was Mr. Joseph Botham, of Sheffield, and Messrs. James Nelson, mason, James Green, joiner, and John Dixon, plasterer, were the principal contractors. Mr Thos. Holmes was appointed steward, and Mr. John Cheesebrough treasurer of the new chapel. The first trust deed comprises many of the names given in connection with the Kirkgate Chapel trust, and we have before us a list of the principal subscribers to the building fund, which it may be interesting to reproduce as indicative of the "giving power" of the period. Arranged according to amount they are as follow :—

James Green ...	£105 0	Geo. Mawson ...	£12 12
Richard Fawcett ...	100 0	Jos. Greenwood ...	10 10
J. Milnes ...	50 0	Swithin Anderton ...	10 10
John Broadbent ...	40 0	Geo. Tindall ...	10 10
John Blackburn ...	31 10	John Rouse ...	20 0
David Dalby ...	25 0	Jas. Bottomley... ..	20 0
John Cheesebrough ...	21 0	Samuel Rhodes ...	10 0
S. Margerison ...	21 0	Geo. Shepherd ...	10 0
Watson Cryer ...	21 0	Thos. Haigh ...	10 0
Abraham Brumfit ...	21 0	David Butterfield ...	10 0
Jno. Greenwood ...	20 0	Joseph Ackroyd ...	10 0
John Allott ...	20 0	John Lawson ...	10 0
Joseph Thackray ...	20 0	John Tankard ...	10 0
Thos. Beaumont, M.D.	20 0	John Key ...	10 0

Many subscriptions of smaller amount were given. The building and ground cost about £8000. It may not be generally known that for some time the side pews in the area of the chapel were not required and were closed up. A sum of £600 per annum is now realised from pew-rents. The chapel was opened on Friday, September 2, 1825 — an event

which forms an epoch in the history of Bradford Methodism. So great was the desire to hear Dr. Adam Clarke, the eminent divine and commentator, who was the morning preacher, that an audience larger than any which had probably ever before assembled in a building in Bradford gathered in Eastbrook Chapel. The Rev. A. Atherton took the afternoon, and the Rev. Jabez Bunting the evening service. On the following Sunday the crowds were even greater, many hundreds being unable to obtain admission to Kirkgate Chapel, where Dr. Clarke was announced to preach, and to them Mr. William (Billy) Dawson preached from a tombstone in the adjoining burial-ground. The services in Eastbrook Chapel were on this occasion conducted by the Rev. David Stoner and the Rev. Thos. Walker. The arrangements for making the collection at Eastbrook were ample enough, there being not fewer than nineteen collectors appointed for the gallery, and twenty-four for the area, and in expectation of the crowd that would assemble to hear Dr. Clarke's discourse, "silver would be expected at the gallery doors." The result of the collection was £580 2s. 8½d.

In the same year considerable alterations were made in the "old" chapel, as Kirkgate was called, and the edifice was ordered to be lighted with gas. The ground lying between Eastbrook Chapel and the Friends' School behind was bought in 1835 for 9s. 6d. per yard from Mr. Harris, and also a plot on the opposite side of Chapel Street as the site for two preachers' houses. Ground for two houses in Manor Row was purchased in 1837 from Mr. Pollard, at 10s. 6d. per yard, and tenders for the building thereof amounted to £1008. An enlargement of Eastbrook Chapel took place in 1845, when a powerful organ was introduced. This fine instrument, built by Mr. Hill, of London, was opened in May, 1845, when

sermons were preached by the Rev. Robert Newton, and by the resident ministers, J. M'Owan, Philip Hardcastle, and Samuel Walker. The instrument was said at that time to be the largest in the county, excepting that in York Minster. It is enclosed in a rich mahogany case, made by Mr. Thos. Mills, of this town. The cost of the instrument was originally £1800, and towards this sum upwards of £600 was collected at the opening services. Since then about £700 has been spent in its enlargement. In 1846 an important step was taken by the trustees of Eastbrook, when the school premises erected in 1831 by the Friends, and familiarly known as the "Quakers' School," were taken over and converted into a Wesleyan Day-school. Under the late Mr. Crebbin this school maintained its reputation, and at the present is a flourishing institution. The old school premises are now, however, about to be superseded by the handsome and commodious structure used for the first time by the Conference of 1878.

Incidental to our remarks as above may be named the great public discussion on Popery *v.* Protestantism, which took place in Eastbrook Chapel on December 3 and 4, 1828, when at least 4000 people were crowded into the edifice. This public tournament was brought about owing to the interruption of a meeting of the Bradford Auxiliary Bible Society by a Romish priest then resident in the town. The chair was occupied by John Hardy, Esq., then recorder of Leeds, and among the champions of Protestantism were Dr. Steadman and the Rev. Benjamin Godwin, of Bradford. On the second day of the discussion the priests, abruptly leaving the meeting, gave up the contest.

From the completion of Eastbrook Chapel in 1825 to the formation, ten years subsequently, of the Bradford West and East Circuits, the erection of not less

than four chapels in the country, together with four schools in Bradford, gave evidence of the progress of Methodism, both as to its extension and stability. The erection of Seven Stars (or Prospect) School and Farsley Chapel, in 1826; the Sunday School in George Street, in 1830; the chapel at Calverley, in 1832; the erection of Slack Side school-chapel, the school in Park Street, and the chapel at Allerton, all in 1833; and the building of Clayton Chapel in 1834, were events of no mean importance in the several districts concerned.

In the decade comprised within the above paragraph several ministers visited the town who left enduring records behind them. Dr. Townley, who became noted as a biblical scholar, was the first example of a Doctor of Divinity in the Wesleyan ministry; he was elected President in 1829. James Methley was also a fine minister, although he may not have attained so exalted a position; and Henry Fish, M.A., who followed him in 1830, was instrumental in bringing in a large acquisition of members. Wm. Hill, who died at Bradford in 1826, was the author of the "Alphabetical Arrangement of Wesleyan Ministers," which has since been continued by the Rev. Marmaduke Osborn, and is considered an indispensable record, especially about the period when ministers are changing circuits. The remains of Mr. Hill are interred in the graveyard of Kirkgate Chapel. The Rev. Richard Felyus who died recently at Harrogate, was also a man above ordinary men. During his stay a great revival took place in the circuit.

In 1835 the Bradford circuit was divided, viz., into Bradford West, including Great Horton, Low Moor, Clayton Heights, Clayton, Wibsey, Allerton, Thornton, Manningham, and Heaton — Bradford East, including Bradford Moor, Dudley Hill, Farsley,

Calverley, &c. In 1842, the Bradford South circuit was formed of places mostly taken from that of Bradford West; it has latterly been styled the Great Horton circuit. In 1866, Manningham and its surroundings having acquired an importance entitling it to severance from Kirkgate, also became a circuit, comprising White Abbey, Girlington, Heaton, &c. Then in 1871 Low Moor was detached from the West circuit, and became a centre having jurisdiction over its own immediate locality; and this was followed in 1872 by the breaking-off of Bradford Moor under the designation of Greenhill Circuit. The division in 1835 involved the appointment of five ministers, as follows:—West Circuit, Philip Garrett, Benj. Pierce, and John Hobkirk; East Circuit, Aaron Floyd and Charles Cheetham; and these were followed by Wm. Leach and W. J. Shrewsbury in the last-named circuit. Mr. Leach was regarded as a thorough disciplinarian, who did his best to get the affairs of the circuit into a degree of order to which they had not previously attained. Even he, however, was not successful in leaving records of important circuit matters in such a condition as was desirable. The Rev. Philip Garrett, who died in Bradford in 1843, had a remarkable taste for algebraic studies in addition to his pulpit work. The Rev. W. J. Shrewsbury was a minister especially well-beloved. He was for twenty years a missionary, and afterwards occupied a prominent position as a temperance advocate and public speaker in addition to his literary labours. He published several works.

Many important results followed the division of the Circuit in 1835; and not the least important was the increased interest taken in church work in each of the Circuits. Both the Dudley Hill and Bradford Moor Chapels were enlarged, and the Wibsey and Centenary Chapels erected. In the



Abbey division a class was formed as early as 1799 by the Rev. William Leach, and in 1837 a triangular piece of ground was purchased from the Rev. Godfrey Wright, and a chapel affording accommodation for 800 worshippers erected. The chapel was opened on August 31, 1838, and Sunday, September 2nd, by the Revs. Robert Newton, John Rattenbury, E. Walker, and Geo. Steward. The collections on the occasion amounted to £500. The chapel has been enlarged and new schools built since then. In July of the same year Wibsey Chapel was opened, after long and anxious waiting for the necessary means. The year 1839, ever memorable as completing the first hundred years of Methodism as a religious organisation—was celebrated in Bradford by the erection of the Centenary Chapel in Clayton Lane, and generally by the holding of "Centenary meetings" throughout the two circuits. Centenary chapel was burnt down in 1864, and has since been converted into schools. The years 1844 and 1848 saw the erection of Heaton Chapel and the chapel at New Leeds. We may notice, too, the erection in 1840 of the splendid organ in Kirkgate Chapel, built under the direction of Dr. Camidge by Mr. Ward, of York, the cost of which was £510; and the reorganisation of the Juvenile Missionary Society of the West Circuit by Mr. S. Dalby—the principles of which have now been generally adopted throughout the Methodist body.

The years 1849-50 were marked by the disruption which took place at that period—a period which, although it may now be looked back upon with complacency, was then pregnant with anxiety in Bradford and the neighbourhood. It may safely be assumed that at least 1800 members left the society during the two or three years succeeding, and became attached to the Reform movement. Only one chapel, however, that at Wibsey, was taken over

by the Reform party. Practically, the Wesleyans were the pioneers of social improvement in the neglected region of Wibsey, having taken charge of the old school there since its erection in 1821. In no place near Bradford, however, was the Reform party stronger than at Wibsey at the period referred to. Of the 300 members in society all but twenty-five embraced the cause of Dunn, Everett and Griffiths, and became Reformers. The Conference party, however, were left in possession of the school-room in which preachings were held until 1869, when a neat chapel was erected at a cost of £3000. In the year 1852 considerable extensions were made to the Kirkgate premises, by the erection of a school-room, morning-room, and class-rooms behind the chapel.

We now come to the year 1853, when the Conference was held for the first time in Bradford, and the Rev. John Lomas was elected president. The resident ministers for the period were—Bradford West, Revs. Willson Brailsford, Elijah Jackson, and Marmaduke Osborn; and Bradford East, Revs. Joseph Stinson, Thomas Collins, and Edward Bryce. Messrs. Thos. Holmes and Wm. Cheeseborough had the honour to acknowledge the votes passed to the Bradford Wesleyans for their hospitable reception of the delegates to the Conference. The numbers of members of society in each circuit were at that time—Bradford West, 1499, Bradford East, 1463, Bradford South, 691. These figures compare unfavourably with those of 1850, owing to the Reform movement.

The chapel in Richmond Road, first known as Norcroft Road, was opened on July 13th, 1853, by Dr. Bunting and the Rev. J. Lomas, the then President. This chapel is of the modern style of Italian architecture, and was first intended to accommodate 1000 persons. The total cost was about £3000.

Extensive additions have since been made to the school premises. Manningham Chapel, the erection of which marked another stage in the progress of Methodism in Bradford, was opened on August 17th, 1859, when sermons were preached by Dr. Waddy and Dr. Raffles (Congregational). The site, valued at £400, was presented by Mr. James Ambler, and the building cost £3000. The school-room adjoining has been added subsequently.

In 1861 the Jubilee celebration of Kirkgate Chapel took place, and in 1864 the Conference was held for the second time in Bradford, when the Rev. W. L. Thornton was elected President. It was remarked at the time that the two most humorous Presidents who have sat in the chair of the Conference have been elected at Bradford, viz., the Rev. John Lomas and the Rev. W. L. Thornton. The meetings were held at both Kirkgate and Eastbrook Chapels. Annesley Chapel, opened in November, 1866, was erected to supply the place of the Centenary Chapel in Clayton Lane. The former, a plain, square building, is altogether eclipsed in architectural pretensions by the newer edifice, which is distinguished by a graceful spire—its erection being regarded as a new departure in Methodist architecture of Bradford. The chapel is built on a prominent site in Horton Lane, and is designed in the early decorated style of architecture. The cost was about £3500, towards which a grant of £500 was made by the Kirkgate Circuit, of which it forms a branch. The large and handsome chapel at Girlington was opened on June 3, 1870, having cost £5000. The style of architecture is a modified Italian, with windows and principal front entrance deeply recessed. At the opening services the Rev. John Rattenbury preached. The year following, Prospect Chapel, to supplant the old "Seven Stars School" (so called from its proximity to the public-house of that name),

was opened by Dr. Jobson. The latest acquisition of branch chapels is that in Otley Road, the foundation-stone of which was laid by Isaac Holden, Esq., on May 3, 1873. The building of this edifice was promoted by the Eastbrook circuit members, who subscribed liberally towards its erection. The accommodation is for 1000 persons, and there is a large school adjoining. The cost of the whole, including site (which was purchased from Mr. William Garnett for £600), was about £6500, towards which Mr. Holden gave £500, Mrs. Calvert £200, &c. The chapel was opened by the Rev. G. T. Perks. During last year the foundation stone of the new schools at Eastbrook was laid by Mrs. Blakey Calvert, when £600 was laid upon the stone. These commodious premises have been practically opened by Conference itself. Eastbrook Circuit is also promoting the erection of a chapel at New Leeds, with schools, &c., to cost £5000. Other places of worship have been added at Frizinghall, Baildon, Guiseley, Esholt, Rawdon, Idle, Charlestown, Saltaire, Shipley, Stanningley, Oakenshaw, Wyke, Windhill, Woodhouse Grove, &c. Between the years 1872-5, during the superintendency of the Rev. Jos. Heaton, a successful endeavour was made to remove the chapel debts in the West Circuit, including of course that upon Kirkgate Chapel; and efforts have also been put forth with the same object in other circuits.

In thus indicating the different stages of the material progress made by Wesleyanism in Bradford, we have attempted little more than a brief record of dates, which, however, may be useful to the compiler of some future history of the denomination. It may be remarked, however, that in place of the two preachers who occupied the area in 1778 there are now 23, and whereas there were then only three chapels and no Sunday schools, there are now thirty-four chapels,

each with schools attached. The number of members in the Bradford and Halifax district is computed at 20,000, and in the Bradford section of it nearly 7000. The numbers in detail are as follow:—Bradford (Kirkgate, &c.), 1068; ditto, Low Moor, 358; ditto, Manningham, &c., 1091; ditto, Eastbrook, &c., 1404; ditto, Greenhill, 702; ditto, Great Horton, &c., 1234; ditto, Shipley, 1059, or a total of 6916. The number of Sunday scholars is 5904; and teachers, 602.

While refraining from any reference to ministers who have travelled the various circuits recently, we have been at some pains to collect fragmentary particulars of those of native birth, and the collection, if not complete, is an interesting one.

Taking them in order of seniority we find that Isaac Clayton was born at Daisy Hill, Bradford, in 1778, and at an early age gave himself to the work of the ministry. Before he was eighteen years of age he preached his first sermon at a place near Halifax, and after officiating as a local preacher for several years he was admitted at the Conference of 1801 and stationed at Thetford. He died at Bradford in 1833, at which place he had been stationed for four years. He was a man of considerable originality of thought, and attained to some proficiency in the study of mathematics, astronomy, and optics. He was a sound preacher and a good man.

Samuel Sugden, born at Bradford in 1787, was an example of the kindly interest exhibited by the Rev. John Crosse, vicar of Bradford, in the youth of his parish. The vicar, discovering in him elements fitted for the ministry, promoted by counsel and personal recommendation his entrance on the work of an evangelist, and for forty-six years he laboured as a Wesleyan minister.

Benjamin Clough was born in the year 1791 in Bradford, and like the preacher last mentioned

attended the weekly meetings held by Vicar Crosse. At the age of seventeen he joined the Methodist Society, and some time afterwards was recommended as a suitable travelling companion to Dr. Coke, the missionary. In this capacity he accompanied the doctor until the death of the latter. Altogether he was engaged for twenty-five years in Ceylon, when he returned and itinerated for fifteen years in this country. Mr. Clough very early distinguished himself as a student of the vernacular and classical languages of the island, and compiled two invaluable dictionaries in Singhalese and English, which were published at the expense of the Colonial Government. He was also one of the translators of the Old and New Testament into Singhalese, and assisted in preparing for the press a translation of the New Testament into Pali, the language regarded by the Buddhists as sacred. He died at Southwark in 1853, aged sixty-one.

Joseph Fowler, born at Horton in the year 1791, also received impressions under the venerable Vicar Crosse and the early Methodist ministers, and preached his first sermon in 1810. In the following year, on the recommendation of the Rev. Joseph Sutcliffe, he was admitted to Conference, and during a period of forty years laboured with great diligence. In 1848 he was elected Conference Secretary, and died in March, 1851, aged sixty years.

Amos Learoyd, born in Bradford in 1795, was one of the first scholars in the first Methodist Sunday school in Union Street, the Rev. Joseph Fowler being then one of the teachers. In 1822 he entered the ministry, and for forty-three years discharged its offices. He died in June, 1865.

The Rev. W. Wood Stamp can also be claimed as a Bradford man, having been born here in 1801, his father, the Rev. John Stamp, being then stationed in

the town along with the Rev. Lancelot Harrison. Mr. Stamp was educated at Woodhouse Grove, being, in fact, the fourth boy entered on the books of that establishment on the opening day, and in 1824 his father was appointed Governor. At the Conference held in London in 1860 the Rev. W. W. Stamp was elected President for the year. Although Mr. Stamp confined himself principally to the work of the ministry, he published several of his literary efforts. Chief of these was his "Historical Notices of Wesleyan Methodism in Bradford and its Vicinity," published about 1841. Valuable as the work is as a record of local Methodism, it has long been out of print, a fact which is obviously suggestive. No better service could be rendered to Methodism in Bradford than by the extension and republication of Mr. Stamp's useful book. Mr. Stamp was stationed in the Bradford West circuit from 1838 to 1840, and four years later he published in the *Wesleyan Magazine* an excellent Memoir of the Rev. John Crosse, Vicar of Bradford. A perusal of this Memoir amply demonstrates the goodness of character of the "blind Vicar," as he was in later years sympathetically styled, and the distinguishing traits in that character which entitled him to rank with such "Methodist clergymen" as the venerable Perronet, vicar of Shoreham; Grimshaw, of Haworth, and Fletcher, of Madeley. According to his biographer, Vicar Crosse "offered to the ministers of Methodism, and indeed to good men of every name, the hand of fellowship; yet without any compromise of principle as a minister of the Church, or any lessening of its zeal for its institutions and welfare. Never, it may be safely affirmed, was Church-of-Englandism in Bradford in so flourishing a state—never had the Church itself so strong a hold on the esteem and goodwill of the popu-

lation at large, as under the vicarial oversight of the lamented Crosse." Until the year 1848 an inscription on a common gravestone alone bore monumental remembrance to the vicar's memory, but in that year a marble tablet was erected by the Wesleyans of Bradford in the Parish Church. The Rev. W. W. Stamp, who attained the title of D.D., died at Liverpool in January, 1877.

Dr. James Dixon, although not of Bradford birth, lived amongst us for so long a period and died within the precincts of the borough, and withal was held in such venerated esteem by many not of the "people called Methodists," that we may be pardoned for claiming loving fellowship with him. The doctor was born at Castle-Donington, Leicestershire, in 1788, and died at Bradford in December, 1871, thus having more than reached the allotted span. He was sent into the ministry at the Conference of 1812, and, after a period of close study, he became a great power in the pulpit, besides being one of the most able speakers of his day. In 1841 he was elected President of the Conference, and the sermon he preached on resigning the chair was afterwards enlarged and published under the title of "Methodism: Its origin, economy, and present position." Towards the end of his course he was smitten with blindness, but for nine years after he still preached and edified all who thronged to hear him."

Of those who have more recently gone out from Bradford, the first in priority of date Matthew Wilson, who went out from the East Circuit to the Fiji Islands in 1834, and after twenty years' residence there, was a preacher in connection with the Adelaide Conference, and died in Adelaide in January, 1876. About the same time John Hornby, of Bradford, went to the West Indies. In the year 1847 two persons went from Bradford into



the ministry, namely, Andrew Rennard and John Nelson; in 1849, John Reacher; in 1851, John Rhodes (A); in 1852, George Holbrey; in 1857, John Rhodes (B); in 1860, Amos White; in 1863, Joseph Rhodes (A), a younger brother of John Rhodes (B); in 1864, Albert Clayton and Andrew Wharton; and in 1868, John Leathley. Of the above, seven were sent out from Eastbrook Circuit and six from Kirkgate. Several of them have achieved a reputation creditable to themselves and to the town which gave them birth. The Rev. John Rhodes (B), who early developed an aptitude for shorthand writing, has for some years been the recognised reporter of Conference proceedings, which, it may be stated, are not open to the members of the Press generally.

To those lay members who have been most active in promoting Wesleyanism in the past we must make sparing reference.

Thomas Beaumont, M.D., however, was a man to be had in remembrance. Born of a Yorkshire Wesleyan family, his father was one of the contemporary preachers with Wesley, and to his death Mr. Beaumont was attached to the same faith. His brother, the late Dr. Beaumont, was one of the lights of the same denomination. Like his brother, too, our Dr. Beaumont was endowed with rare natural gifts, especially the gift of oratory. He was an active Commissioner before the incorporation of the borough, and after that event he was made an alderman. He was also an unswerving advocate of temperance. Dr. Beaumont died at Bradford of heart disease in October, 1859, aged sixty-two years.

The late Mr. Thomas Haigh, to whom brief reference has been made, died in August, 1876, at the advanced age of eighty years. For nearly sixty of these years he had been a member of Kirkgate Chapel, and for a large proportion of the time filled

some of the principal offices connected with the place. His merits are recorded in some measure upon a tablet on the walls of the chapel he was so instrumental in upholding. Mr. Haigh was born in Manchester in 1796, and came to Bradford when quite a youth. For some time he was a schoolmaster; then he became an artist; but on the establishment of the Bradford Savings Bank fifty years ago, he obtained the appointment of secretary and retained it until his death. His habits were of the most methodical character, well fitting him for dealing with detail work and statistics.

Mr. Thomas Holmes, who was connected with Kirkgate Chapel from the period of its erection, and was treasurer from 1837 until his death in 1862, in addition to his services as local preacher, was another example of the ever-constant friend and adviser which are to be found in all religious communities; and in the same category may be placed Mr. George Parkinson, who, as the colleague of Mr. Holmes, has held the office of chapel steward from the year 1834, and is still active in the promotion of circuit work.

With these slight references to local Methodism, we must now close. The active work of the Conference of 1878 has now been commenced, and, naturally, the attention of those of our readers interested will be turned to subjects of present interest and import, rather than to simple records of past events.

Remembering the high honour which attaches to any place privileged to entertain the "Legal Hundred," and the delegates appointed to attend Conference, it will be conceded that Bradford is somewhat distinguished in having been selected for the third time within twenty-five years as the place of meeting—an honour which has only been accorded to two other places within the same period, namely, Bristol and Sheffield.

